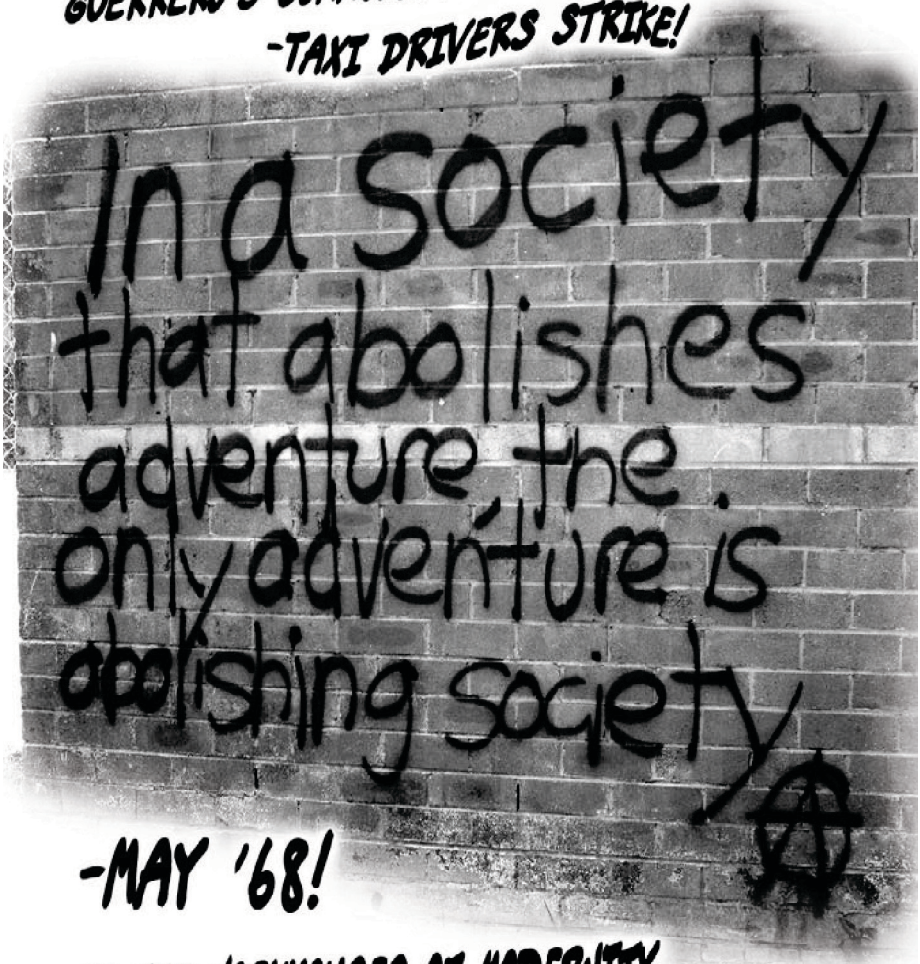
# MUTINY

A PAPER OF ANARCHISTIC IDEAS & ACTIONS

MAY 2008

-POPULAR JUSTICE: GUERRERO'S COMMUNITY POLICE

-TAXI DRIVERS STRIKE!




-MAY '68!

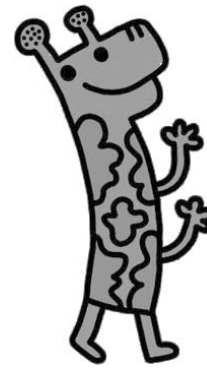
-IN THE WORKHOUSES OF MODERNITY

FREE!

**Mutiny began as a group exploring different ways to resist war at home & abroad. We started a monthly zine to explore different avenues of disobedience. We know there are lots of radical ideas around & we want people to write about their experiences & opinions. The Mutiny collective is meeting regularly again: we're looking at Australian imperialism & avenues of resistance in the Pacific & the region. Contact us if you're interested.**

*(The mutiny zine collective does not necessarily agree with all the opinions of contributors. Contributors do not necessarily agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective. The mutiny collective doesn't agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective.)*

**Editors for this month: T with Alice, Graf Cat, Maximum Solidarity, Princess Mob, SourDough and Dumpstered Twin.**



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# BRIEF NEWS

## May Day Around the World

**Chile:** Anti-capitalist rioters clashed with police, and built barricades in the streets of Chile's unofficial capital city, Valparaiso, on the eve of May Day. In Santiago, hooded protesters destroyed state property, attacked police and their armoured vehicles. At least one police officer was injured and 96 protesters were detained during the violence.

**Colombia:** Radicals attacked a bank and smashed windows during demonstrations in the Colombian capital. In Medellin, Colombia's second largest city, demonstrators attacked and overturned an armoured truck, during an unruly protest.

**Japan:** Among a labour market where part-time and other irregular workers have come to comprise one-third of the workforce, freeters and other youth participated in "Mayday 2008 For Freedom and Lives" on the 3rd, near 1,000 people (numbers according to sponsor) shouting "Irregular Employees Are Not Disposable!" in a demonstration march through Shinjuku, Tokyo.

This demonstration was organised by the "Freeters' General Union", and marks the 4th year of Mayday events. Participants danced and chanted slogans such as "Raise Hourly Pay!", "Shorter Work Hours!" to the beat of quick-paced music flowing from atop truck beds in a "Sound Demo" as they proceeded in a two-hour walk around JR Okubo and Shinjuku train stations.

A 33-year-old man who works as a temporary day-labourer and who'd attended the event had this to say: "I'm fed up with wages too low to live on and thuggish employment practices. I've been doing temp-work for almost 10 years, and I think it's time that irregularly employed workers raise their voices."

**Germany:** In Hamburg, anti-fascists clashed with police and blocked roads and train lines in order to disrupt a neo-Nazi march. Leftists and anarchists attacked neo-Nazi buses and cars smashing up and torching more than a dozen of them. 20 police officers were reportedly injured, and approximately 250 rioters were detained. Some journalists were also injured at the hands of the extreme right-wing marchers. The riots were the most intense the city has seen in years. Similar riots took place in Berlin and Nuremberg.

**Russia:** Moscow anarchists demonstrated and danced with the help of a portable sound system within sight of the Kremlin. They joined thousands who came out to protest and decry rising food prices that have been affecting poor people around the world.

**South Korea:** Students and police clashed in Seoul during an anti-government march to mark the holiday.

**Spain:** 25 000 people marched in Madrid to demand economic reform including many members of large anarchist trade unions.

**Switzerland:** Tens of thousands rallied and marched in cities across the country in support of increased wages and more favourable labour conditions. Unrest broke out in Zurich, where anarchists and others ran riot outside of the officially sanctioned rally. Approximately 300 people were detained during the violence, and 2 people were injured - one seriously - as a result of an automobile accident.

In Lausanne, anarchists were the only ones to organise a demonstration. They led a march of hundreds through the downtown area and smashed the windows to businesses including a McDonald's.

**Turkey:** In Istanbul, unionists and other protesters exchanged a steady flow of projectiles with riot police. One officer was disarmed and beaten with his own club. Police used chemical weapons, causing at least one demonstrator to be sent to the hospital. The May Day holiday has been banned in Turkey since the Taksim Square massacre of

1977.

**United States:** Dockworkers with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union walked off the job at ports up and down the West Coast, including Oakland and San Francisco, calling for an end to the war. Union officials estimated the number of workers at 25 000 while maritime officials placed the number closer to 10 000. The strike pretty much shut down cargo operations.

Anarchists in New York City took part in traditional labour and immigrant rights marches that began in Brooklyn and Manhattan's Chinatown and converged in Union Square, before rallying near the Jacob K. Javits Federal Office Building that houses U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Overnight anarchist graffiti appeared outside banks, real estate brokerage offices and other businesses in both Manhattan and Brooklyn. Windows at a Prudential Douglas Elliman Real Estate office in Williamsburg, Brooklyn was among those shattered by vandals.

In Washington a bloc of black-clad anarchists left an authorized immigration rights May Day march and attacked banks and the state capitol building. The windows of two banks were smashed, despite the fact that customers and employees were inside. The group also allegedly attacked police officers who tried to stop them. Police used pepper-ball guns against marchers.

Government business was temporarily disrupted and windows were broken as dozens of protesters burst into the legislature chanting anti-state and pro-immigrant slogans. Protesters left without arrest, but left their demands such as "Burn the Capitol" on the building's walls. Six people were arrested throughout the day, including an individual who was also arrested at a riot at Evergreen State College in February.

**In Other News...**

**Australia:** Union Solidarity Coordinator Dave Kerin is now facing up to 6 months jail for supporting striking workers at Boeing.

The Australian Workplace Ombudsman had issued Kerin with a "notice to produce documents" in relation to the recent strike at Boeing. Kerin had been asked to supply a government agency with all information and documents concerning Union Solidarity, the AMWU and rank & file members by May 8. Basically Dave had been asked to "rat".

Union Solidarity stated it "will not comply with laws and government agencies whose sole purpose was to prevent workers having the ability to strike and organise. In the last election the Australian people voted overwhelming to get rid of anti-union laws, Union Solidarity operates within the spirit of that intention!"

For more info: www.unionsolidarity.org/irnews/2008/05/defend-dave-kerin.html

**Chile/Argentina:** Ex-political prisoners, Marcelo Villarroel Sepúlveda and Freddy Fuentevilla Saa, were captured in San Martin, Argentina after being denied entry to a night club. Both had escaped Chile after being accused of participating with three other men in a failed bank robbery in the Chilean capital in October 2007, where one cop was shot dead and another man wounded.

Also captured was David Cid Aedo who is being considered an accomplice. The Chilean State are requesting extradition which will be decided by an Argentinian judge. Supporters hope the request will be denied and/or at least delayed as they are currently being held for other charges by the Argentinian courts, namely possession of false identification and carrying illegal weapons, discovered by Argentinian police during the arrest outside the nightclub.

Back in 2007, shortly after the news of the robbery had hit the media all of the accused had escaped the country to live underground overseas. Two are still fugitives and all claim they are innocent and that they have been set up by the Chilean

State for their political background. Both of the arrested are ex-members of Mapu Lautaro and MIR (armed revolutionary leftist groups), both of which are treated as terrorist organisations by the State. Also, both had already spent over ten years in jail for a previous accusation of murdering police during an armed confrontation. However, they claim they are continually being targeted for their personal ideological views and political activity in an attempt to criminalise general political struggle throughout Chile by discrediting certain members and groups.

Surveillance videos of the bank robbery, where all runaways are alleged to appear, and other footage of the arrests in Argentina are constantly being displayed in the national media. In addition, other ex-Lautaristas have been under heavy surveillance and targeted for arrest, especially on the national day of protest on the 29th March.

Supporters fear that once in custody of Chilean police the arrested men will be ill-treated.

**New Zealand:** Peace activists have attacked and

deflated a large inflatable globe housing a satellite dish at a top secret New Zealand spy base in protest at US military actions.

The group, calling itself ANZAC Ploughshares, said it cut through fences and razor wire and avoided electronic sensors before using a sickle to slash one of two 30-metre white globes at the Waihopai base near Blenheim at the top of the South Island.

The base is described as a satellite communications monitoring facility, but peace campaigners say it is part of a global signals interception network called Echelon. "The Echelon spy network, including Waihopai, is an important part of the US government's global spy network and we have come in the name of the Prince of Peace to close it down," said Ploughshares in a statement.

It said the attackers built a shrine and prayed "to remember the people killed by United States military activity".

Three men, one of whom was a Dominican priest, were arrested at the site.

Ploughshares said that the New Zealand government was privately supporting the war in Iraq while publicly condemning it.

**Malaysia:** About 10 protesters made their presence felt at a defence and security exhibition in Kuala Lumpur, handing out brochures and sandwiches to reinforce their core message - spend the nation's money on food, not arms.

An hour into their peaceful protest, however, several police personnel and an exhibition representative told the group to leave the lobby of the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) where the four-day event began.

The group has served vegetarian food to the homeless every Sunday in Bukit Nenas over the past seven years, as a way of protesting military spending by the government and to help the poor. Its volunteers began the protest at 10am in front of The Mall shopping complex before moving to the PWTC, the venue for the 11th Defence Service Asia Exhibition (DSA), the world's second biggest exhibition of its kind (with 712 companies from 49 countries). It is organised by DSA Exhibition and Conference Inc.

"Some of the countries participating in this exhibition are poor and conflict-afflicted countries. Because of the global arms trade, the food crisis situation in these countries will worsen," one volunteer stated. "Malaysia is also in the middle of a food crisis. I believe the large amount of money spent on militarism should be channelled towards the increase of food production to ease the price hikes of food items." He also added that Malaysians should stand up against the arms industry and trade, as it is the root cause of such global issues such as poverty.

Another volunteer, Yew Hun Ng, said organisers of military exhibitions claim that such events are aimed at boosting security: "At the moment, this country needs more attention to social issues. We pay too much attention to defence and security which only benefit people in the industry. I also pity the soldiers who have to go through war."

"Capitalists have been profiteering from the arms trade and war for a very long time. This is often the backdrop to global issues (such as poverty). People are against war, but they don't realise who the suppliers are," he said.

# TAXI DRIVERS STRIKE

A spontaneous blockade by taxi drivers in central Melbourne successfully forced the government to promise to meet most of their demands. The strike was sparked by the stabbing of a driver. Hundreds of drivers, mostly from India & Pakistan, blocked the road with their cabs & staged a sit-in in the middle of the intersection for more than 22 hours, staying overnight.

Under the agreement, the government will pay half the money required to fit all taxis with security screens by Christmas. Also, passengers will be required to pre-pay fares between 10pm & 5am. The government also agreed to compensate the injured taxi driver & launch a media campaign to promote the pre-pay system.

As part of the deal that ended the protest, police agreed to waive all parking fines that they'd given drivers who had joined the blockade.

The injured driver was reported to be in a serious but stable condition.

*The following is edited from the text of a leaflet produced & distributed in support of the strike by Mickie Skelton, a Melbourne anarchist:*

**'Our parents never sent us (here) to receive our dead bodies'**
-From a sign displayed during Tuesday's protest.

At 2am on April 29, a 25 year old cab driver was stabbed inside his taxi in Clifton Hill. Jalwinder Singh was stabbed seven times by his passenger – his cab then veered off the road & into a pole, near the Normanby Hotel on Queens Parade. His assailant apparently dragged his body some hundred metres from the car, & then fled. Shortly following the stabbing the police were called. They did not arrive until over two hours later. At 4.30am Jalwinder was found lying near the scene of the accident, freezing & covered in blood. His weak signals for help had gone unheard.

Jalwinder came from Karnal, a city in India. Like many night shift taxi drivers he worked as a cabbie in order to support himself as a student. Night shift begins at 4pm, when the drivers will swap over, & finishes at 4am the following morning – a 12 hour work period. It is common for these drivers to be migrants or students or both, whose study schedule forces them to find suitable working hours.

In the time between the assault on Jalwinder & the close of the day shift, the story of his assault was circulated to other cabbies via text message. At 4pm on Tuesday, rather than beginning their shifts as usual, night drivers converged on the intersection of Flinders & Swanston streets. Numbers rapidly grew as passing cabbies noticed the disruption, learned the story, & then joined the throng. Using their cabs to block the surrounding streets, night shift drivers began an act of civil disobedience, staging a mass sit-down in the intersection, & forcing traffic to a halt. Sources say that by 8pm there were some 2000 striking cabbies present.

At 1am on Wednesday. 400 people were still present in the intersection. Coffee, tea & biscuits were being passed around. In the centre of the loosely grouped crowd, several young men were using a megaphone to discuss their grievances & form a plan of action.

The five demands were:

- Immediate compensation of $500,000 to Jalwinder's family.
- Taxi-driver safety screens to become a mandatory part of taxi roadworthy testing.
- Taxis to have a pre-paid fare insurance system around the clock.
- Special protection to be made available to taxi drivers at certain places & times.
- Police to give a damn about drivers!

**'We do not just work in your 7/11s, we do not just work in your petrol stations, we do not just drive your cabs – we drive your economy.'**

– From a protest speech

In November 2005 a similar demonstration took place when a young cab driver, Rajneesh Joga, was stabbed to death. After this display of dissatisfaction the government made promises, however, as is evident from the stories shared amongst the drivers, very little has been done, & nothing has changed.

Taxis blocking the street

All of the drivers I spoke to reported having been assaulted either physically or verbally. One driver told me that he had been stabbed, & hit with a baseball bat on different occasions in the last month alone. It seems there is a number of things that caused drivers to be placed in danger, & a great many things which rightly cause them to feel dissatisfied. As casual workers very few night drivers own their cabs. Any fares taken during a shift are split 50/50 between the driver & the owner. If a passenger refuses to pay or avoids paying the fare by doing a runner, the driver must then pay from their own pocket the lost total. However when evasive passengers are reported to the police, drivers are told that it is a civil matter, & that there is nothing that the police can do.

Cab companies also contribute to problems for late night drivers. While companies enforce strict standards of uniform dress & cab hygiene, they have refused to fit taxis with the perspex safety screens which are otherwise common all over the world. As one driver put it, 'New York, London, Europe, even Sydney – all these places have screens! Why not here?' The lack of an effective protection barrier between the driver & the passenger becomes a major problem when night drivers must service 'cosmopolitan' Melbourne by picking up drunk & frequently aggressive passengers. Often drivers are forced act as a pick up service for the police & for licensed venues when they wish to move on intoxicated punters.

**'We are providing a service to them, a nice service, why are they rude to us?'**

What the cabbies are calling for today is for a major shift in attitude towards those who do the essential work which (literally) drives our city forward, yet who are disrespected & mistreated every single day. By marching in solidarity with them we are calling for the government, the police & the general public to recognise that the rights of cabbies are being ignored, but that these rights are the basic human rights that we are all entitled to. Safety, respect, & workplace support should be the norm for all Victorians, & so we stand in solidarity when we state 'CABBIE RIGHTS HUMAN RIGHTS!'

# Popular Justice:

## Guerrero's Community Police

**By Puaz, Regeneracion Radio**

*The freedoms that were conquered by the human species are always the work of the "illegals," those who took the law into their own hands & tore it to pieces.*
-Ricardo Flores Magon, *Regeneracion,* September 8, 1910

### Community Police

The Community Police is a community justice project in Guerrero's southern Sierra Costa region in Mexico. It is the product of a long social struggle & is in no way affiliated with the Mexican government. The Community Police is based on the concept of collective work, known as *tequio* or *faena*, which, together with the traditional guards, has existed since ancient times in the cultures which inhabit what is now known as Mexico.

These traditional practices have nothing to do with the present-day concepts of public security, rule of law, or legality under the capitalist judicial system. The most profound difference lies in the concept of community justice & being a community's guardian. This justice doesn't just mean to punish those who commit crimes against others; rather, justice is holistic & involves watching over health, education, & other community needs. This means that the only guarantee of justice is well-being & balance for the whole community. On the other hand, the capitalist system's concept of public security or justice is selling security in order to protect the material interests of the few haves against the majority of the have-nots.

The Council of Indigenous Authorities (CAIN) was founded in Santa Cruz del Rincón, Guerrero, in February 1994, & its objective is to watch over the well-being of the community, because neither the state nor the federal government does so. They decided to undertake projects in areas such as: communication, health, education, security, & an Indigenous Training Coordination Center. Within the area of communication they constructed a stretch of highway between the communities, & there's still many more stretches to build. The Community Police was born in 1995, after a series of assemblies between diverse organizations from the region such as coffee-growing organizations, farming unions, indigenous organizations & parishes.

This project was born from public assemblies because animal theft, assaults, & sexual abuse of women became intolerable. Sexual abuse was the most painful for the communities, & one particularly unbearable case was that of a 7-year-old girl. The public security forces only carried out operations that bothered the communities more than they provided them with security. For example, the local police would ask assault victims for money, which they said was for gasoline. So extortion, arrogance, abuse of authority, inefficiency on the part of the governmental authorities, & at times their collaboration with criminals all led the people to back the Community Police.

Each officer that joins the Community Police is elected in an Assembly. If the prerequisites established by the community are met, they elect eight community police in the larger communities, six in the mid-sized communities, & four in the smallest communities. Likewise, if it is necessary to remove an officer from duty it is also done in an Assembly.

Community Police do not receive money or any other personal benefit from their community service. & each one of them has an occupation through which they sustain themselves & their families (generally they work the land). Their service rotates so that a person who is elected does not have to abandon their livelihoods. This means that each police officer is a part of the community that for a couple of days each year calls upon him to provide security, & for the rest of the year he is protected by other *compañeros* like himself.

The Community Police has a presence in 56 communities in ten municipalities in the Costa Chica & la Montaña regions of Guerrero. In its twelve years of existence, it has succeeded in making these communities one of the safest areas in the state. It has the complete backing of the people & the community assemblies, who have on various occasions had to undertake marches & mobilisations so that the state & federal government would respect the Community Police.

## Community Justice

After a while the communities realised that it didn't work to detain delinquents & deliver them to government jails. Faced with this situation, the assembly took initiative & tried to jog its collective memory about how justice was practiced by their ancestors. They recalled that, for example, if someone stole a bull & was apprehended, they were marched through the community along with a parade of people who threw firecrackers & a band that played music. This caused people to think long & hard before committing a crime. Now the Regional Coordinating Committee of the Community Authorities (CRAC) is in charge of administering justice in the communities where the Community Police has a presence.

Within this concept of community justice it is understood that when someone disrespects or hurts another person, they haven't just offended that person; they've disrespected or hurt the whole community. Therefore, to be able to make amends for this offense it's necessary to work for the benefit of the whole community. The offenders isn't thought of as an enemy who needs to be driven away or isolated, but rather as someone who has committed a grave error & can in some way try to make amends & return to being part of the community.

To make amends to the community a period of community service is undertaken—repairing or constructing roads, schools, or hospitals, for example. The duration of the community service depends on the seriousness of the offense & can range from three months to a couple of years. This process is called "re-education".

Re-education does not mean depriving a harmful person of their freedom or isolating

them from society; it means a period in which in addition to community service, there is also time for personal reflection & analysis. Each person has to think about their values & how they will conduct themselves in the future. This period of reflection is supported by the community & the community authorities through constant conversations with those who are in the process of re-education. There have been cases where the person was the only breadwinner in their family. In these instances the community helps the family by giving them beans & corn.

The responsibility to administer justice doesn't only lie in the CRAC's hands. Local problems are resolved in local community assemblies, & only when it's of a serious nature or at the regional level does the problem go to the CRAC.

## Autonomy

To understand the processes of autonomy in Mexico it's necessary to be clear that autonomy is not new to these lands. Indigenous communities have a long history of autonomy with their own languages, medicines, & foods, as well as the social & political organisation of their communities. Imperialists have tried to destroy this community-based way of understanding social organisation—independent & autonomous but always working together—with wars of conquest for more than 515 years.

Recovering this autonomy is difficult for Mexican indigenous communities because it is necessary to confront the nation-state & the global capitalist system, but in a way they've already walked this path & are familiar with the experience of being autonomous. Even though those who are now trying to reclaim their self-determination in their lands & territory may not have lived these experiences of autonomy in the flesh, it is a history that they carry in their hearts & collective memory.

The Community Police & the CRAC are adherents to the Zapatistas' Other Campaign, & in April 2006 they met with the Sixth Commission. While the Zapatista *caracoles* (centers of government) have achieved autonomy without having to make treaties or initiate dialogs with the government, the Community Police established a relationship with the state from the very beginning so that the state would respect the project. Although in some cases, like the Zapatista *caracoles*, it appears easy to not have relations with the state; in many others it's not so simple. But this does not mean that it is not equally valuable to analyse these experiences in the anti-capitalist struggle.

The Community Police has had different relationships with the state depending on who is governing. For example, on a couple of occasions the government has given them weapons, a vehicle, or a house for the indigenous authorities to use in the administration of community justice. However, this "support" is completely insufficient—after all, there are now 672 community police officers who need communication equipment, vehicles, & infrastructure, & the community has worked together to meet these needs.

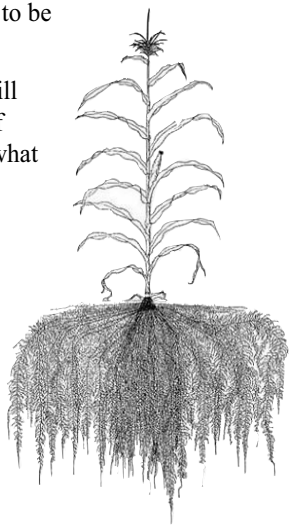
In order to be able to try autonomous projects in our neighborhoods, streets, cities, or communities it's necessary to understand that the power to have total autonomy from the state is not always possible in the beginning due to various factors. For example, while Zapatista *caracoles* have received a lot of international solidarity in support of their

economic, productive, education, & health projects, many other communities & struggles don't. They see themselves as forced to demand that the government build these projects. Despite having a relationship with the state, in essence communities run their own projects & still risk repression. For example, arrest warrants have been hanging over the heads of various members of the Community Police & community activists & it appears as though the government now wants to act on them. [Translator's note: In Mexico the government issues warrants against activists for petty crimes they may or may not have committed & then shelves the warrants for years, allowing them to pile up until they can be used at an opportune moment, such as during an uprising or when a community organization becomes too effective. Right after the uprising in Oaxaca began, for example, warrants issued years ago against APPO & Section 22 activists were dusted off to legally sanction their politically motivated arrests.] During its first years in existence the Community Police was disarmed by the Mexican Army & some of its members were jailed, & it was only through social mobilisation that the government was forced to respect the will of the people.

## Dignity

Concepts like respect & dignity put forward by Indigenous resistance struggles are easy to translate to western languages, but they're difficult to understand. Respect doesn't only mean not offending or not attacking something or someone. Rather, it involves understanding one another & understanding that we're not all alike & that we don't have to be alike to be able to live in peace.

The concept of dignity is far from that which our capitalist society puts forth when it tries to sell you a "dignified life", of a well-being that most of the time only applies to yourself or your family. The dignity that indigenous people talk about is knowing that no one is suffering for our own well-being & knowing that our actions are carried out with collective justice. Dignity is always feeling happy with our lives & wanting our communities to feel that same happiness, & that whatever injustice, wherever it is committed, is an injustice to all of us, & we won't continue to be dignified if we don't struggle to end these injustices.



Only if we can understand these concepts, even just a little, will we be able to see & understand the importance of the motto of the Community Police, "Respect for our rights is justice," & what this dignified project means for the global struggle against the capitalist system.

*For more information on the Community Police in English & Spanish, please see* **www.policiacomunitaria.org**.

*Puaz works with Regeneracion Radio, an independent community radio station in Mexico City. Their articles & broadcasts about the Zapatistas' Other Campaign & the struggle in Mexico can be found at* **www.regeneracionradio.org**.

***Translated & also published at*** **http://www.leftturn.org/**

# In the Workhouses of Modernity

## *A Morality Tale*

Herein is told the tale of Janko of the alligners, and his quest for higher remuneration and greater self-management in his place of wage-slavery.

On reaching adulthood I journeyed many leagues into the east, away from my town of higher schooling to the sprawling city of Sydney. There I undertook studies in natural philosophy, which I was not able to in the modest town from whence I came. After five cycles of the seasons I completed these studies and also some others.

Now that I was educated and had my testamur to prove it, I sought employment in my realm of expertise. This I found in the workhouse of Optium, where a fibre optic device was being manufactured. This sharemarket enterprise was expanding at a swift pace, doubling its workforce each six months.

There was I employed under the newly introduced legislation of the owning classes, the dreaded AWA. This had created a new standard of the day by removing many benefits and conditions favourable to the worker, which in days gone by had been wrenched from the same owning classes.

An ample wage of $40K was given to me, yet this sum was meagre when compared to those given to our physics comrades in other workhouses. My masters also thought it fit that I should get no extra for working a shift ending two hours before midnight and that the first seven hours of overtime be at my usual hourly rate, and beyond that at time-and -a-half. To add extra insult to this the AWA, which I negotiated with all the powers that my individual unemployed self had at my disposal (and I am luckier than the majority, in that I am of the same sex and colour as our rulers), reigned over me for a full five revolutions of our Earth around the sun, with no assured prospects of increased pay within this period.

This situation I found to be unacceptable. But how would I secure a more favourable position for myself and my comrades? Believing bureaucracy to be an autocratic and wasteful organisational form, I abhorred the notion of seeking out help from a union - so I attempted to organise the workhouse autonomously.

Having never organised in a workhouse, I had much to learn. I spent two moons talking with different workers and writing leaflets to hand out. This propaganda I never did distribute, as I felt it might create the perception that I was ordering my comrades around (I am not so worried about this notion now).

From these activities I barely made any progress. No one was interested in hearing me rant and rail about how the five or six of us could shut down production (we happened to work a section of the production line that was essential to the whole factory's production and only we knew how to operate it) and so had much bargaining power.

I was low in spirits and anxious for more money - oh how greed is stoked the more money is thrown at your feet! So, after minimal progress, I crawled to the AMWU (Australian Manufacturing Workers Union) for aid. They embraced me with open arms (after I'd fought through three or four callhouse workers who had little knowledge about what I should do).

I met with a sub-state-branch-fourth commradesky-lieutenant delegate. After repeatedly spouting the fine prospect of "our shining light" Krudd being elected and the vanquishing of our common foe AWAs, and recounting some war stories from other fights they had had, she assured me an organiser would contact me. One did and I arranged for him to meet a couple of the workers. We then proceeded to have a few meetings at lunch with and without the AMWU organiser (whom, as an aside, was once the ruler of that 'young labor' club whom exercised great power over student politics in the SRC at the University of Sydney). I created an 'e-list' to facilitate discussion, to no great effect.

After all of this we had the AMWU draft us a letter demanding a meeting with the wage-house head to negotiate better pay and conditions. All of us marched into the office of our Optium Australia's ruler and requested a meeting, which he promptly granted us, and then a couple more over the next fortnight. We were humoured and some actions were taken regarding operational issues, which, to be truthful, merely increased efficiency and hence productivity and profitability. Our requested meeting with a union negotiator never eventuated, and we didn't follow it up.

What did eventuate was that a few of us were bought off and everybody got a little. The whole (50+) of the production staff got an increase of afternoon shift loading from 10% to 15%, and our overtime of time-and-a-half was to begin after 3 hours rather than the previous 7 hours (working a 38 hour week). Four of the alligners (myself included) recieved raises to bring us to $43K ($41K for one of us with no Physics degree). This was enough to almost bring to a standstill the ball we had rolling for greater change.

Only lately, 4 months later, are people beginning to murmur amongst themselves as our production and stress continue to rise. What irks me most is the affect on organising the mention of the word "union" had. It catalysed people to act. The Union would come along and spout all of the facts and figures as to how we were being paid less than un-degreed people in similar fields and that our negotiations would in now way damage the company and people loved it. I had neither the skills nor the gall to 'tell' people what to do.

Also, the anarcho-syndicalist or anarcho-communist community in Sydney hadn't the resources to aid me. There needs to be anarcho-syndicalist or anarcho-communist minded comrades with resources behind them to offer anyone in my prior situation organisational aid, so as to take power away from the bureaucratic and owning (unions and bosses) classes.

On a personal note, I accept that I was naive to think that the concepts of worker self-organisation and self-management would be so readily received and accepted by non-radicals in this day and age. Presently I will be departing these shores for the Orient and then to the Occident. I am weary of the struggle at the workhouse. I am happy with what I achieved but wish I did more.

It was heartening though, that upon my second last day of work I attended a union meeting which was organised by a co-worker not me. So the struggle will continue for a short while at least.

*Janko, the alligner*

# 'Be realistic, demand the impossible' - May 1968

Sour Dough

How we commemorate the 'great' revolutionary events of history tells us a lot about how we perceive our own revolutionary dreams. Do we glorify those times as 'utopia' almost achieved and try to recreate the varying circumstances that led to that moment? Do we place it within a context of a much longer ongoing struggle that ebbs and flows and which every now and then throws up an opportunity to significantly change society? Do we celebrate or do we mourn? The first option is defeatist. And the second seems to suggest waiting for pure coincidence. It fails to recognise the importance of ongoing contestation and the amount of work that needs to be done for there to be the necessary sense of solidarity between people involved in different struggles.

The French uprising of 1968 had everything we might look for in an inspiring revolutionary moment: a genuinely mass movement; occupations of universities and factories; a general strike; burning barricades in the streets; and posters and slogans that actually inspire instead of deflate. Situated in the context of 'the year that shook the world', the events that occurred in France continue to have the most resonance in the popular imagination. This might have to do with the shock that it all occurred in a relatively wealthy, conservative society in western Europe rather than as part of an anti-colonial uprising somewhere in the third-world.

'Beauty is in the street'

There were also the Situationists, whose influence on how the events of May 1968 have come to be seen is considerable. For the at times inaccessible language and the artsy wank, the Situationist-inspired slogans and posters from the streets are certainly some of the most recognisable images of the time. Their analysis of the events is also crucial, rarely attempting to put a simple revolutionary narrative on complex events. While critiquing the overly-bureaucratic nature of the student organisations, at the same time they pointed out that 'purist' positions, which emphasised the significance of the workers' struggle over the initial occupation of Sorbonne University failed to give due course to how the original occupation did directly provide a model for others to follow.

It is artificial to attempt to find comparisons between what happened in France in 1968 and our situation now in the hope similar events could happen here. The greatest practical lesson of 1968 is that when a revolutionary moment does arrive it is rarely planned or expected. That when people are collectively and autonomously organising to make change, it is important to not let that be co-opted by vanguardist or electoral political parties or reformist unions. It is the new structures that are created in those moments that are truly revolutionary.

Revolutionary history isn't about an event with each passing year making the gap wider, but about all struggle - even in harder times - building a bridge between those particular times when resistance does coalesce to make a movement that can shake society to the core. This doesn't mean we shouldn't take inspiration from historical events but that we should also treat them as part of our collective experience, to learn from and apply as useful, instead of this thing someone else did way when. After all, to merely celebrate one event which didn't actually make revolution would be most un-Situationist like – one of their graffiti slogans read:

'Run faster comrade, the old world is behind you!'

# REVIEW:

## FEAR OF A BROWN PLANET

### NAZEEM HUSSAIN & AAMER RAHMAN

#### CRACKER COMEDY FESTIVAL, FACTORY THEATRE

What kind of stand up comedy starts with an acknowledgement of Aboriginal ownership of this country and ends with a Malcom X speech? The kind of comedy show that takes subjects like racism, terrorism and riots and makes them both hilarious and deeply thoughtful.

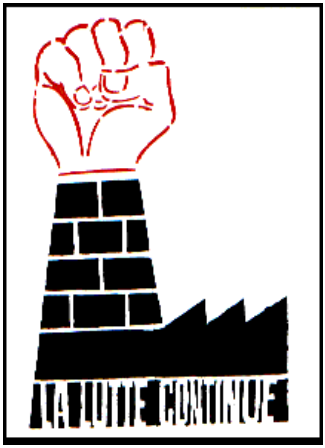
The show opens with a video montage mixing war-on-terror news footage with radical Black American political culture – including, of course, Public Enemy. Nazeem Hussain and Aamer Rahman apply this fury to their local situation as Muslims in Australia.

I have to admit to some bias here (have I ever written a review that wasn't biased?). Aamer is an old friend and I'd been talking the show up before I'd seen it to anyone who'd listen. You know when you're at a boring yet tense demonstration and someone will always decide to cheer themselves up by making fun of the cops, but it's usually just painful and kind of embarrassing? Well, when I've seen Aamer make fun of cops it's always been funny – so funny that often even the police crack a smile. This isn't a story about humour bringing opposing sides together though – more than once, it's got him arrested.

The audience was mixed ('Some chocolate, some vanilla,' as Nazeem described it.) For the white audience it was often an experience in laughing and squirming at the same time: part of the discomfort is the unusual experience – in public entertainment at least – of being actively racialised as white.

As I said, after the jokes, the show finishes with another video screening. Not the hyped-up-jump-cuts of the opening, but an unadorned segment of Malcom X speaking to a crowd about people of all races coming together in the struggle against racism and injustice.

Princess Mob



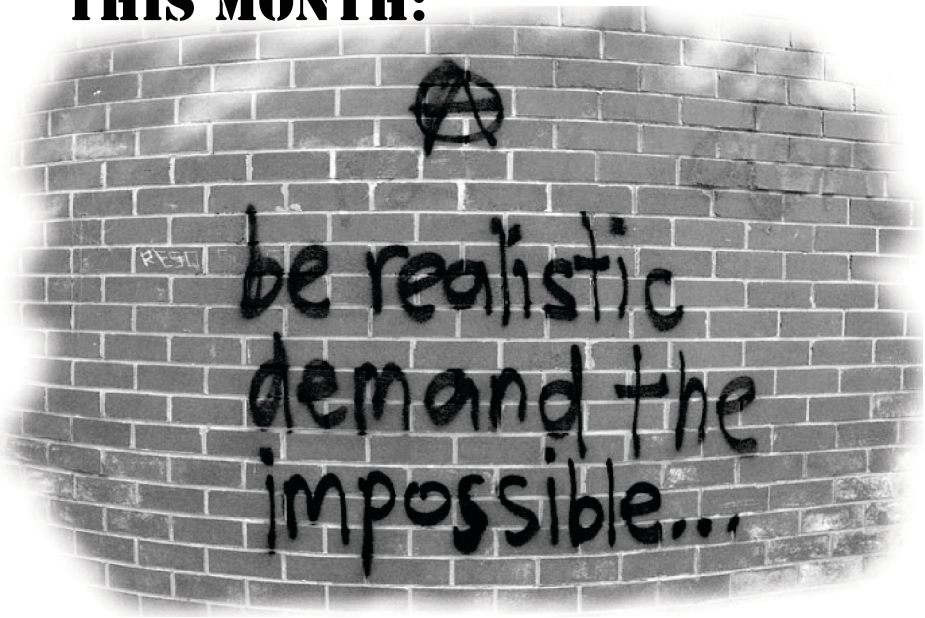

## Celebrating the 40th anniversary of the French uprising in May 1968

**Film screening**: *Grin Without a Cat (Le Fond de l'air est rouge),* a 3 hour elegy to the New Left and the contradictions that swept the world in 1967 and 1968. An amazing collection of footage from the streets of France as well as from around the world.

**PLUS a launch of a zine all about the May, 1968 French uprising**

**@ 5pm on Sunday, May 25th at Black Rose Anarchist Library**
**22 Enmore Rd, Newtown (100m from Newtown Station)**

# THIS MONTH:




We remember the uprising in France 40 years ago &
bring you stories of struggles today, with-

News of the wildcat taxi strike in Melbourne with which drivers won their demands for more safety.

A report from Mexico about community police redefining the meaning of justice.

A fairystory about workplace organising.

Brief news of Mayday around the world & more.

A review of 'Fear of a Brown Planet'.